Met Office

January 2015

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1981-2010.

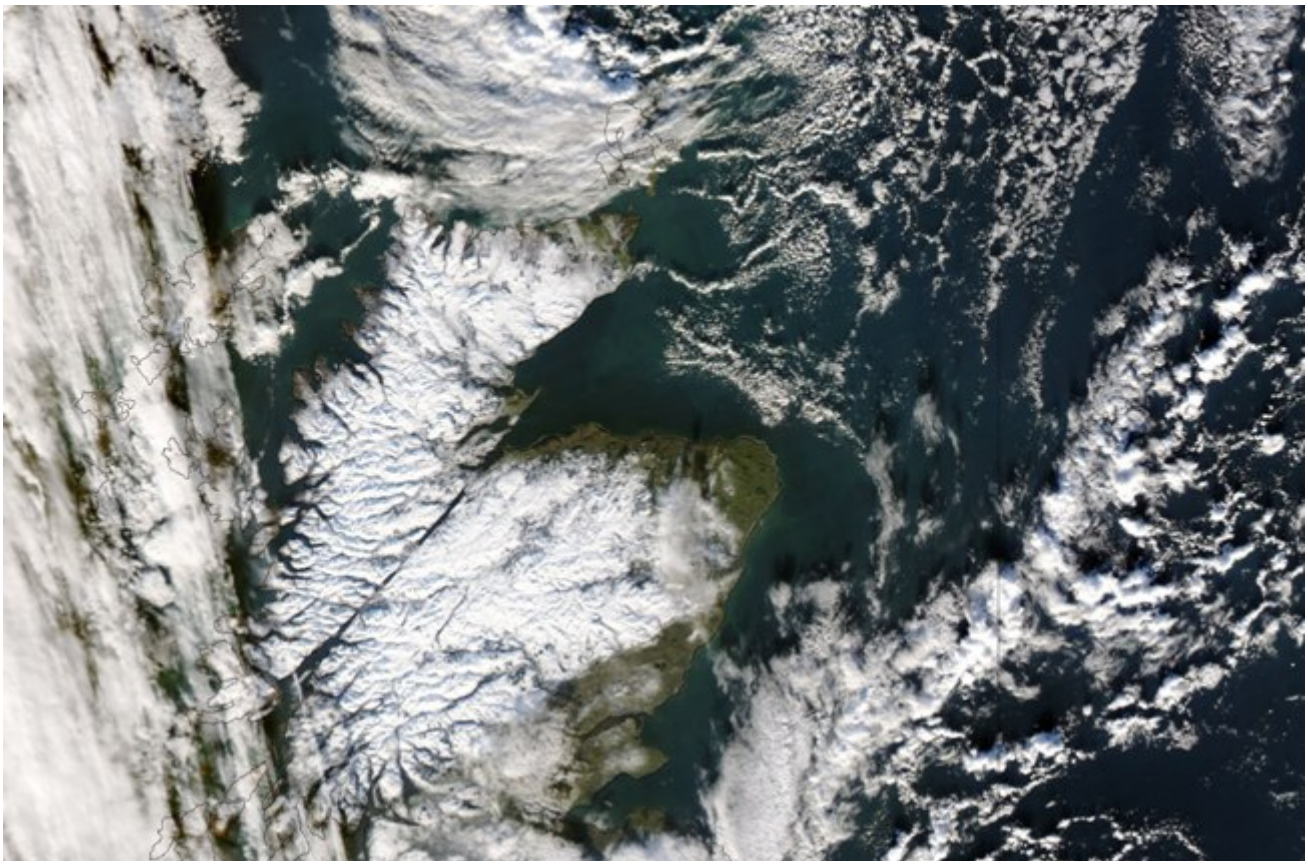
UK overview

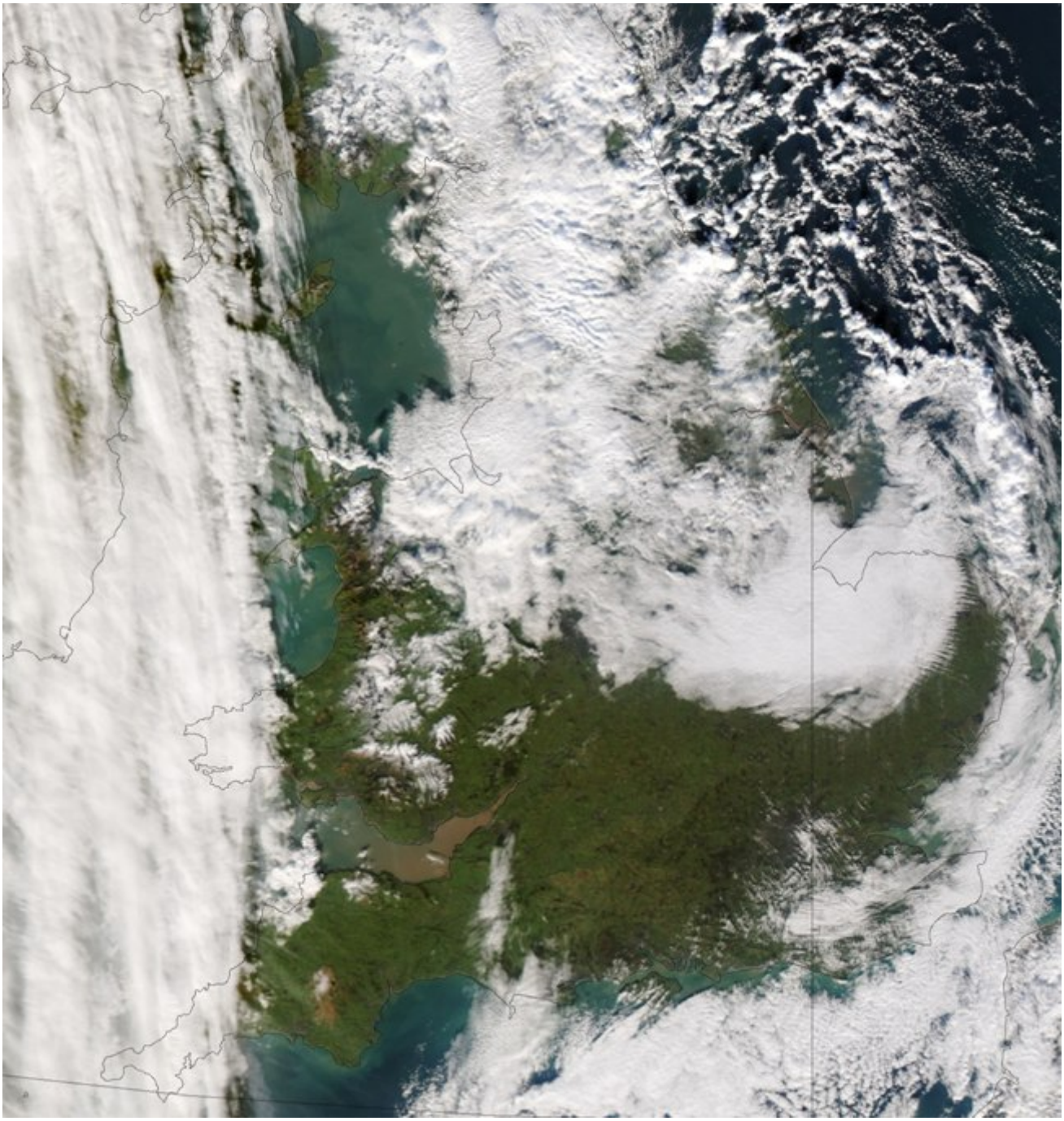
For much of the month, the UK was under the influence of a westerly weather type, with a sequence of Atlantic depressions tracking across the country. A sequence of particularly deep lows between the 9th and 15th brought some very stormy conditions to Scotland, especially the Western and Northern Isles, as well as plenty of rainfall. The first half of January was very mild, but the second half was colder, with mostly quieter weather but some snowfalls at times, especially across high ground in the north. There were some sharp frosts with temperatures lower than at any time earlier in the winter or during the whole of last winter.

The UK mean temperature for January 2015 was 3.7 °C, which is 0.1 °C above the 1981-2010 long-term average. Relative to average, south-west England was warmest and Northern Ireland coldest. Rainfall was above average in many areas, but especially much of Scotland; the overall UK rainfall total was 127% of average. Sunshine was well above normal in most places, especially eastern areas, and the UK received 124% of average sunshine hours. It was the UK's equal-fifth sunniest January in a series from 1929.

A maximum temperature of 17.0 °C was recorded at Sidmouth (Devon) on the 9th. A minimum temperature of -13.7 °C was recorded at Loch Glascarnoch (Highland) during the daytime on the 19th. In the 24 hours ending at 0900 GMT on the 8th, 128.4 mm of rain fell at Honister Pass (Cumbria). A wind gust of 113 mph was recorded at Stornoway Airport (Western Isles) on the 9th. Snow depths of 30 cm were recorded at Tulloch Bridge (Highland) and Aviemore (Inverness-shire) on 14th, and also at Buxton (Derbyshire) on the 30th.

This satellite image on Sunday 19 January 2015 shows extensive snow cover across the Scottish mountains, and snow across upland areas of Wales and parts of Dartmoor and Exmoor. Copyright Met Office / NASA





Weather impacts

New Year's Day brought some heavy rain and strong winds to northern areas. The weather then remained unsettled before a series of vigorous depressions affected the north of the UK from 8th to 15th January. A major storm on 8th to 9th brought wind gusts of 80 to 100mph across the Western Isles and northern Scotland with Stornoway Airport recording 113 mph, one of the highest gust speeds recorded at a low-level UK station in recent years. This was rapidly followed by a further major storm on 10th which again brought gusts of up to 100 mph across Shetland. The storms caused widespread transport disruption, with ferry services and trains cancelled across parts of Scotland. Power supplies were affected in various parts of Scotland, with some customers remaining cut off for two days. There were some reports of fallen trees and huge waves battered exposed coastlines in the north and west.

A further deep low passed close to Scotland on 12th bringing gusts of up to 70 mph. As the disturbed spell continued, an unstable, cold airstream brought heavy showers which fell as snow across parts of central and southern Scotland on 13th and 14th. On 15th, a man was killed by a falling tree in County Antrim, Northern Ireland.

Fortunately the weather was mostly quieter during the remainder of the month. However, heavy snow showers across the north of the UK caused disruption at times, most notably on 29th when the runways at Manchester Airport were closed for several hours, and wintry conditions with snow and ice continued to cause some problems. The month ended with further sharp frosts, with many areas having a covering of snow by then.

England diary of highlights

The month began with mild conditions, and the regular passage of frontal systems bringing rain and showers, especially during the 7th to 14th with strong winds at times. It turned colder around the middle of the month, and the second half was rather less unsettled and much colder, with some low temperatures and sharp frosts at times; precipitation often fell as snow over higher ground.

The mean temperature for the month was 0.2 °C above the 1981-2010 average, with the far south-west the mildest area. Rainfall overall was 110% of average; it was drier across Lincolnshire and north-east England, with around 50% in the driest places, but rainfall was well above average along the south coast and in Cumbria. Sunshine amounts were well above average almost everywhere, especially in the east, with overall 128% of average sunshine. It was the equal-fifth sunniest January for England in a series from 1929.

1st to 6th:

The 1st started dry in southern areas but it was wet in the north; it was breezy and mild with temperatures reaching 15 °C in Northumberland. It was mainly dry but cloudy on the 2nd with only a few isolated showers in the north, and it felt cooler in a north-west breeze. Overcast on the 3rd with rain for many central and southern areas which cleared east during the afternoon. After a widespread frost on the 4th, a dry and bright day followed. The 5th was mainly dry, with the best of any brightness in the east. A band of rain spread quickly east during the morning of the 6th and cleared the south-east by late afternoon.

7th to 12th:

The 7th was mainly dull and wet with rain for many areas, heaviest in the north-west with Shap (Cumbria) recording 59 mm, although it was mild in a fresh south-west wind. The 8th was mainly dry in the north, but an area of rain spread from the west over southern areas, slowly clearing the south-east in the afternoon. A bright start on the 9th before an area of rain and strong winds spread into the northern half of the country, with 43 mm recorded at Shap, and gusts over 70 mph in North Yorkshire. A cold front cleared south during the early hours of the 10th leaving a showery, cool day in a strong north-west wind. The 11th saw scattered showers for southern areas but rain affected many northern areas with strong winds in coastal locations. A band of rain and blustery winds spread from the north-west during the 12th and lingered in southern areas for much of the day.

13th to 16th:

The 13th was a day of sunshine and showers, some of the showers turning wintry with thunder in the south-west, although winds eased slightly. The 14th saw some wintry showers in the morning, with up to 6 cm of snow recorded on higher ground of the Borders and the south-west, but an Atlantic depression brought rain and strong winds to many areas by the end of the day. The 15th saw a return to showers, with the heaviest and most frequent in the west and north, many being wintry in nature. Rain in the north-west and the south-east cleared during the morning of the 16th to leave a bright but chilly afternoon.

17th to 21st:

The 17th was mainly dry and bright after a widespread frost, although many northern and western areas saw showers. After another widespread frost on the 18th, with a minimum of -8.5 °C at Topcliffe (North Yorkshire), there were snow showers in many northern and central areas. The 19th saw another cold start, but it was a pleasant day with scattered wintry showers in the north-east. Many areas were frosty again on the 20th, with -7 °C widely recorded in the south, but rain edged into the south-west during the morning. There was rain for

many southern areas on the 21st and snow for many central and northern areas with Buxton (Derbyshire) recording a depth of 15 cm.

22nd to 31st:

High pressure began to build, and after another cold start in many areas the 22nd was mainly dry and sunny. A widespread frost on the 23rd saw temperatures as low as -8.8 °C in Upper Lambourn (Berkshire), but a fine day followed with only a few scattered showers in the west. Temperatures fell to -6 °C in parts of the south early on the 24th but again a fine day followed, albeit feeling cool in a north-west wind. Mainly dry again on the 25th, although there were some scattered showers for western areas. Overnight rain 26th cleared the south-east by the morning of the 26th to leave another mainly dry and bright day. The 27th was mainly dry and bright with only some isolated showers in the north-west. A cold front cleared the south-east during the morning of the 28th, then sunshine and showers, with some wintry precipitation in a fresh north-west wind. The 29th was a day of sunshine and showers; many of the showers were of sleet or snow and Spadeadam (Cumbria) recorded a snow depth of 13 cm. The 30th was dry and bright for many areas although the far south-west and south-east saw some showers in the afternoon. A band of rain, sleet and snow spread south early on the 31st, followed by scattered showers mainly in the east and feeling bitterly cold in a northerly wind; Buxton (Derbyshire) recorded a snow depth of 30 cm.

Wales diary of highlights

The first half of the month saw mostly unsettled but mild weather with rain or showers for most of the time, and stormy conditions with strong winds in the second week. However, the second half was colder and less unsettled, becoming frosty at times with occasional snow.

The mean temperature for the month was 0.3 °C above the 1981-2010 average. It was a rather wet month, with rainfall totals overall 119% of average. Eastern parts were quite sunny, with 110% of long-term average sunshine hours for Wales overall.

1st to 6th:

The 1st started wet in the north-west, with the rain spreading to other areas of Wales in the afternoon. There was some sunshine on the 2nd, with isolated showers which became more widespread later in the day. The 3rd was cooler with rain in the morning then dry but cloudy in the afternoon. Some fog in places on the 4th after a cold start, but fine with variable cloud. Cloudy on the 5th but mainly dry although some light showers affected the west coast later in the day. A band of rain passed west to east through the morning of the 6th, followed by drier and clearer conditions for the afternoon and evening.

7th to 15th:

The 7th was windy and wet, with coastal gales from mid-morning, but the rain was more sporadic by the afternoon, before another more organised band of rain in the evening. A band of rain from the south-west crossed south and mid Wales from dawn on the 8th, clearing by late morning to leave sunshine and showers, but another band of rain moved into the west in the evening, accompanied once more by gale-force winds with a gust of 76 mph recorded at Aberdaron (Gwynedd). The 9th was quite windy with some rain in North Wales for a time, remaining dull but mainly dry through the rest of the day. After patchy rain and gales in the morning of the 10th, with a gust of 86 mph recorded at Capel Curig (Gwynedd), it became mainly dry. It was showery all day on the 11th, with strengthening south-westerly winds reaching gale force in the evening. The 12th was dull with gales at first and rain in the morning which moved slowly south-east through the afternoon, finally becoming confined to the south-east by the evening. On the 13th, rain crossed the country from west to east, turning to snow away from the coast, clearing away to leave further showers of rain, sleet and snow for the afternoon and evening. On the 14th rain or snow showers continued in the early hours, before rain, heavy at times, moved in from the west during the afternoon, with strengthening winds up to severe gale force, and a gust of 96 mph was recorded at Capel Curig. Gales on exposed coasts continued on the 15th but with some

sunshine; showers, sometimes of snow earlier in the day, were followed by more persistent rain in the south in the evening.

16th to 20th:

The 16th, 17th and 18th were bright but cold days with sunshine, but also isolated showers, some wintry. A very cold night with a minimum temperature of -7.9 °C at Sennybridge (Powys) on the morning of the 19th, then a dry and cold day with isolated showers in the west and some sunshine breaking through. The 20th was cold again with -7.5 °C at Sennybridge in the early morning, with patchy rain or showers particularly in the south which turned readily to snow inland.

21st to 31st:

Not quite as cold on the 21st but cloudy with isolated showers through the day. Isolated showers in the south-east at first on the 22nd then dry with some sunshine in the west. The 23rd had sunshine and showers in the afternoon. Fine with some sunshine on the 24th. The 25th was milder and cloudy with some patchy rain or drizzle at times. Rain in the early hours of the 26th cleared to leave mainly dry weather with a little sunshine for much of the day. Cloudy on the 27th but mainly dry, with just a few showers in the early hours and patchy light rain later in the day. There were gales during the morning of the 28th, with a gust of 80 mph at Capel Curig, and bands of showers merged into spells of rain throughout the day. The 29th saw frequent showers, some wintry over the hills, with little sunshine. On the 30th and 31st there were some showers but many places stayed dry and cold with some sunshine.

Scotland diary of highlights

The month was largely unsettled, with some heavy rain at times, though less so towards the east coast. A succession of vigorous low pressure systems brought very stormy conditions between 9th and 15th, especially in the north. The latter part of the month brought some colder and briefly more settled weather; temperatures occasionally fell below -10 °C in the Scottish glens. There were significant snowfalls across high ground during the month.

The mean temperature for the month was 0.1 °C below the 1981-2010 average. Rainfall overall was 142% of average, with approaching double the long-term average for parts of western and northern Scotland. Lerwick (Shetland) recorded its wettest January for 100 years. However, rainfall totals were near average in the east. This was Scotland's fourth wettest January in a series from 1910. Sunshine amounts were 117% of average overall; it was especially sunny in Aberdeenshire but with least sunshine across the Northern Isles.

1st to 8th:

The 1st was a mild day, but wind and rain swept across the country. It was colder on the 2nd, with frequent showers turning to sleet and snow on higher ground. A dry day in the south on the 3rd with scattered showers in the north. Mainly dry and cold on the 4th apart from a few light scattered showers. Mostly dry on the 5th apart from a little patchy rain. Starting wet for most on the 6th, with a frontal system moving east across the country, then turning cold and showery by midday. Most areas were wet and windy on the 7th as rain swept across the country from the west, heavy at times, with 49.6 mm recorded at Achnagart (Highland). Cold on the 8th, with widespread blustery showers turning to sleet and snow on high ground.

9th to 15th:

It was very stormy overnight into the 9th, with severe gales and heavy rain causing widespread travel disruption, and a peak gust of 113 mph was recorded at Stornoway Airport although the wind then eased off through the day. A cold day with gale-force winds on the 10th, and rain turning to sleet or snow on higher ground. Another weather system brought strong winds and heavy rain, with some snow at first, to most areas on the 11th; only the north-east escaped the worst, with 70.8 mm recorded at Tyndrum (Perthshire). On the

12th most areas saw frequent and prolonged showers, falling as snow on high ground. It was another cold day on the 13th, with sleet and snow except for Aberdeenshire. Rain, sleet or snow for most areas on the 14th, becoming heavier during the afternoon and evening and with gales spreading in from the south-west. Gusts of 67 mph were recorded at Drumalbin (Lanarkshire) and West Freugh (Dumfries and Galloway), and both Aviemore (Morayshire) and Tulloch Bridge (Perthshire) recorded snow depths of 30 cm. More rain, snow and gales for most areas on the 15th with a gust of 80 mph recorded at Edinburgh, Blackford Hill.

16th to 22nd:

It was less windy on the 16th, with rain and snow showers mainly in the north and west at first but becoming more widespread by afternoon. A cold day on the 17th with some snow showers in the north and west. Cold again on the 18th with snow showers in the north and east. Generally dry and bright on the 19th but with some patchy snow in the south and the north-west. It was the coldest night of the year so far on the 20th with -13.7 °C recorded at Loch Glascarnoch (Highland), and the rest of the day was cold with rain spreading into the west through the day and turning to snow on higher ground. Most areas were dry on the 21st, but with some showers in the east and rain on the west coast. Mainly dry again on the 22nd, apart from some patchy rain in the north-west, with some bright spells in the east.

23rd to 31st:

A weather system brought strong winds and rain across the country from the west on the 23rd, but it turned showery later. Cold and showery in the north and west on the 24th but mainly dry in the east. A dry start in the east on the 25th but strong winds and rain spread from the west later in the afternoon. The 26th was windy too, with showers for most areas away from the east coast where it remained mainly dry. It remained breezy on the 27th with showers in the west throughout the day and rain in the north-east in the afternoon. Sleet or snow on the 28th, spreading from the west to most areas during the day. Rain, sleet and snow in the west on the 29th, but drier and brighter in the east. It was another day of frequent snow showers in the north and west on the 30th but mainly dry in the east. Frequent snow showers in the north on the 31st but mainly dry in the south.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

Much of the month was unsettled, with some windy spells, especially during the first half. However, there were some cold, sunny days in the second half of the month, although with some snow across higher ground.

The mean temperature for the month was 0.5 °C below the 1981-2010 average. Rainfall amounts were mostly near normal, but slightly wetter towards the west, with 122% of the long-term average rainfall overall. It was also quite sunny away from the north coast, with 132% of average sunshine hours.

1st to 17th:

After a dry start on the 1st, rain spread from the south in late morning. The 2nd saw some bright spells, but with scattered showers mainly in the west. An area of rain spread north during the morning of the 3rd, followed by scattered showers for the afternoon. After a widespread frost on the 4th with a minimum temperature of -5.9 °C at Katesbridge (County Down), showers developed during the morning but died out in the afternoon. Rain spread in from the west during the morning of the 5th and continued in many areas for much of the day. Overnight rain cleared early on the 6th to leave a day of sunshine and scattered showers. Strong south-westerly winds on the 7th brought cloud and rain. It was brighter with blustery showers on the 8th, with a peak gust of 65 mph at Ballypatrick Forest (County Antrim). Strengthening winds brought rain by midday on the 9th, heavy at times, with 24.8 mm at Edenfel (County Tyrone). After further rain overnight, strong north-westerly winds on the 10th brought blustery showers. It continued windy on the 11th, with showers which were wintry on high ground. Spells of rain overnight, heavy at times, gave way to showers during the 12th, but it became drier during the afternoon. The 13th was a bright but showery day. Mainly dry at first on 14th but sleet and snow with strengthening south-westerly winds affected much of the country for the rest of the day: snow

depths reached 11 cm at Lough Fea (County Londonderry) and gusts approaching 60 mph were recorded along the coast. Rain, heavy in places, and gales continued overnight and into the morning of the 15th, with a peak gust of 72 mph at Magilligan (County Londonderry), before a clearance to brighter showery conditions with winds easing. The 16th was a bright day with some showers, falling as snow at times. Showers again on the 17th, heaviest in the north with snow in places.

18th to 24th:

Northerly winds brought mainly dry but very cold weather with overnight frosts on the 18th and 19th. There was a severe frost overnight into the 20th with a minimum temperature of -7.8 °C recorded at Katesbridge, and the day saw some sleet and snow at times. The 21st had some rain and snow in the north at times but elsewhere was mainly dry and bright, with fine weather continuing through the 22nd as well. There were showers at times on the 23rd, some heavy in the afternoon. Scattered showers continued at times overnight but the 24th was a mainly dry day.

25th to 31st:

Overnight rain cleared during the 25th to leave a milder south-westerly flow, followed by a further band of rain in the evening. It was mainly dry on the 26th and 27th but rain spread in through the evening of the 27th. The rain cleared to leave frequent showers for the 28th, and the strong winds veered north-westerly with the showers turning to snow through the afternoon and evening, heavy at times with accumulations at all levels, up to 30 cm of snow on high ground, and a gust of 68 mph at Orlock Head (County Down). Snow showers, some heavy, continued overnight and during the 29th, with winds remaining strong. Wintry showers were more scattered on the 30th with a good deal of dry, bright weather in most places as winds eased. After a few scattered wintry showers at first on the 31st, it became dry and bright with a brisk northerly wind.

Last updated: 27 November 2015